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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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March 2012

President's Message-The Feedline

By Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX

Greetings, fellow members! Don't forget to wear some green on the 17th!!!

Time is flying by, isn't it? Soon, the annual June Field Day will be upon us all once again and soon thereafter, the California QSO party event will make its presence known. For this year's Field Day event, I'm going to send out both email and snail mail to our local elected city, county and state representatives to invite them out to the event so they can see first-hand just what Amateur Radio is and how it functions if they don't already know it. Whether they actually make to the time to attend the event is another thing. Kinda like pulling teeth!

Well, I finally got my Diamond X-50A dual band antenna mounted with the help of Jerry, KD6WKY who you all know as our club secretary. Aside from assembling the mounting pole and mounting the antenna itself which by the way sticks up in the air about 25 feet for a total combined height above ground is 35 feet, I still have to set a couple of support poles in the ground and in concrete for one more side guy wire as well as using the new support pole for another antenna I'm planning on erecting soon with KD6WKY's help once again. My Yaesu FT-7900R radio has the Sacramento Valley frequencies programmed into it and so if I'm on the air, it's using the radio in the scan mode and again, there seems to more radio activity on another local 2 meter repeater than of our club repeater. I had a nice ragchew with K6RSR who lives over in Brentwood the other night and we were talking about what best direction he should take in erecting a HF antenna since he resides in a H.O.A. community. And other radio contacts have been with another ham out in Lincoln and another ham who was traveling home on I-80 west way up in the Emigrant Gap area after visiting with some family relatives in Lovelock, NV.

The approximate cost of the mounting materials (excluding the antenna, coax cable, the PL-259 and antenna switch) is about $100! Combined materials altogether is about $375.00.

But bear in mind that all materials were purchased over about a year and not all at once since money these days is still a bit tight! But how it was installed will last for many years!!

The radio questionnaire survey will go out to everyone of the club members soon and I would like to see a good decent return of them in the 90% range if that is possible so that I can take a look at those returned surveys and discuss the results with our club officers to see what direction this club should look at or what our club members are wanting from Amateur Radio.

So remember that if you receive an envelope in your mailbox from yours truly, it is the questionnaire and I ask that you please fill it out completely and return it to me!! I just want to remind all of you that in order to get more out of the Vaca Valley Radio Club, there has to be an equal amount of input into it whether it's using the two Mt. Vaca repeaters, attending the monthly club meetings, stepping forward to give a radio related presentation, asking questions or making a suggestion!

There will be a radio related presentation for the March club meeting.

Until next month, be safe, be well and G.O.T.A.!

73!

Marcus K. Maclean, KI6WDX
President

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Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

I just wrapped up the last contest I plan on working until the California QSO Party next October. I worked the ARRL International DX Contest SSB portion last weekend. As a minor contest I just work the it as I find time throughout the weekend. As usual, this contest was full of South American, Carribean, and Japanese stations.

I worked the upper bands on HF all weekend long. I probably worked five or six QRP stations out of Brazil and Japan on 10 meters as well. This must be a big contest in Japan.

About half of all my contacts were JA's.

At the very beginning of the contest I worked my friend Thelma DU1IVT on 15m, I worked her again on 1Øm the following day. I've known Thelma for several years. I don't know for sure, but she may be the only YL licensed radio amateur in The Philippines. Thelma is an Electrical Engineer by profession and is a professor at some big technical institute in the Manila area among other professional work. If you are on Facebook, you should look her up.

I found it funny when she was telling me all the difficulty she had with her HOA getting approval for her 70' tower with a Force 12 beam antenna on it. Her neighbors suggested that she might be happier with a different hobby like needle point.

After the contest at ØØØØ UTC (4:00pm local time Sunday afternoon) we had a schedule on 15m SSB for a chat. Best DX chat I have had with anyone in a long time. The signal strength was very good, we compared notes on the contest, and got caught up on our families. Thelma suggested that when my wife Cora goes to Manila in a few weeks that they get together for lunch. They can work it out on FB.

I ordered 1,000 new QSL cards a few weeks ago from Gennedy UX5UO in The Ukraine. I have used him several times, the work is very good and the price is right. I expect the next batch of cards will arrive in a few weeks. It usually takes about a month. I highly recommend him if you want great looking cards. Just do a web search on his call sign, you will see his website.

As soon as the cards arrive I will spend a few weeks between tax return prep doing QSL cards. I send a shoe box size batch of cards to the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau every March. The Outgoing Bureau is a benefit of ARRL membership so I use it.

I was over at Walter WB6JTJ's QTH this afternoon adjusting and tightening his antenna. We worked a station in Michigan near Detroit on the 1Øm band with a signal strength of 10 over S-9. We were both pretty jazzed about that. Now if we can just get the TVI problem resolved, we're in business.

I played a small part in helping Marcus KI6WDX get his VHF/UHF antenna up in the air last weekend. We erected that antenna and guyed it off that those Suisun wind don't do anything to it. So far so good.

I purchased my ticket to the 2012 International DX Convention next April in Visalia. I am always nervous about that place. The Holiday Inn isn't the best place to eat a meal in Visalia. A few years ago I even called the Tulare County Health Department about the awful food and hair on the ice cream I was served. No kidding. That place puts a white mystery sauce on everything. When I bring this information to the attention of the organizers they always seem surprised telling me nobody ever complains. I sure enjoy the convention, but not the meal time adventures. I'll let you know what happens.

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2011
ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Richard Craig, KJ6MIB
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Tom Christman KE6MDM

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

ARRL Seeks Comments on Proposed 9 cm Band Plan

03/06/2012

A few months ago, the ARRL UHF/Microwave Band Plan Committee **asked the Amateur Radio community** about current, planned and projected uses of the amateur bands between 902 MHz and 3.5 GHz. The response was beyond our expectations, with hundreds of comments and suggestions received. Thanks to all of you who took the time to share information with us.

After reading the feedback, the committee began working on the band plans; the first draft plan ready for review is for the 9 cm band (3300-3500 MHz). Please take a moment to look over the accompanying draft (*see below*) and let the committee know if you have any major concerns. Draft plans for the remaining bands under study will be released for comment as they become available over the next few months.

As a reminder, the purpose of these band plans is to share

information about how the amateur bands are being used and to suggest compatible frequency ranges for various types of application. We recognize that local conditions or needs may necessitate deviations from a band plan, and regional frequency coordinating bodies may recommend alternatives for use in their respective regions.

Please submit your comments via **e-mail** by April 9, 2012. Thank you once again for helping us complete this important project. 73, Rick Roderick K5UR, Chair, ARRL Microwave Band Plan Committee

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New 60 Meter Privileges Now In Effect

03/05/2012

Effective today, US amateurs have new privileges on the 60 meter band. In addition to an increase in effective radiated power from 50 to 100 W, hams can now transmit CW and PSK31 on the following channel-center frequencies:

Channel 1: 5332.0 kHz

Channel 2: 5348.0 kHz

Channel 3: 5358.5 kHz

Channel 4: 5373.0 kHz

Channel 5: 5405.0 kHz

Amateurs can also transmit Upper Sideband voice and PACTOR III on the following suppressed carrier frequencies (the frequencies typically shown on transceiver displays):

Channel 1: 5330.5 kHz

Channel 2: 5346.5 kHz

Channel 3: 5357.0 kHz

Channel 4: 5371.5 kHz

Channel 5: 5403.5 kHz

For more information, **download** *60-Meter Operations – New Privileges and Recommended Practices*. Also, a revised ARRL band chart is **available for download**.

Watch for the article "New Privileges on 60 Meters" byARRL Regulatory Information Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, later this month in the April issue of *QST* magazine.

Hollywood Movie Features Morse Code, Homebrew Equipment -- and Sea Monsters!

In the movie ***Journey 2: The Mysterious Island***, Sean Anderson (played by Josh Hutcherson) receives a coded distress signal that comes from a mysterious island where no island should exist. Sean decides to follow the signal with the unwilling assistance from his stepfather Hank (played by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson).

The movie opens in Dayton, Ohio with Sean on his motorcycle, being chased by police officers. Sean had been caught breaking in to a "satellite facility." When questioned by Hank, Sean confesses that he had received a coded message from his grandfather (played by Michael Caine), but his equipment was too weak to copy it; he decided to go somewhere where there were bigger antennas. The message -- a string of one and two syllable words taken from the books by Jules Verne -- makes no sense to Sean. Hank, a former US Navy cryptographer, offers to help decode the message; he feels this will be a good chance to bond with his stepson.

Immediately, Hank figures out that the message is really in Morse code: each one syllable word is a "dit," while each two syllable word is a "dah." Hank translates the message, which gives clues to the location of the grandfather's whereabouts.

Sean explains to Hank why he wants to hunt down the signal: "A few nights ago, a radio signal got sent out from these coordinates. It could be the mysterious island that Jules Verne wrote about."

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

We participate in public service events throughout the year and are always ready to assist with communications during times of emergency.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please email us at w6vvr@w6vvr.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance.

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at: w6vvr.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3
The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.200(-)

the world and meet up with some lunatic who's messing around on a ham radio?"

"That's not some lunatic," Sean says. "That's my grandfather."

This scene takes place at Sean's desk in his bedroom. There are various pieces of radio gear -- such as a Kenwood TS -450s transceiver, an Ameritron AL-80 linear amplifier, an ICOM IC-28A 2 meter transceiver, an MFJ 949E antenna tuner, a Lowe HF-150 receiver, a microphone and books on radio dating from the 1930s -- on the desk; when Sean's house is shown from the street, however, no antennas are visible. Behind the desk are posters from Jules Verne works, as well as maps -- including ***The Radio Amateur's World Map*** from Yaesu -- and QSL cards on the bulletin board behind the desk.

One of these QSL cards belongs to Ned Conklin, KH7JJ, of Honolulu, Hawaii. Conklin is the President of the Battleship *Missouri* Amateur Radio Club, **KH6BB**. "The movie people contacted Joe Speroni, AH0A, looking to borrow radio gear for the movie," Conklin told the ARRL. "He didn't know anyone who had equipment they could loan, so he contacted me to see if the *Missouri* had any. We provided him with some gear, as well as some beautiful QSL cards that we had received from hams in the South Pacific. They shot the scene with the radios here in Hawaii, but the movie people asked if they could take the equipment to North Carolina in case they had to use it again."

Through the clues in the coded message, Sean and Hank learn that Sean's grandfather is on an island off the coast of Palau, located about 500 miles east of the Philippines. The two go to Palau, in hopes that they can charter someone to take them to the island where they believe Sean's grandfather to be. There, they meet up with Gabato (a helicopter pilot played by Luis Guzman) and his daughter Kailani (played by Vanessa Hudgens). The group makes their way to the island and finds the grandfather, who takes them to the hut that he has built out of the boat that brought him to the island.

The grandfather explains that he was glad Sean was able to receive and decipher his message. He said he built his radio in three months "out of an alarm clock, copper wire and a teaspoon." When the others tell him that they should get on the radio and call for help, the grandfather says that would be a good thing, but "**you have to wait for the communications satellite to come around into the proper position**." When asked when the next time would be, the grandfather says "Oh, about two weeks." After this scene, radio is never mentioned again.

Eventually, the five get off the island in a most unique way, with Sean and Hank returning to Dayton. Kailani also ends up at Dayton as a student at the University of Dayton. Thanks to the remarkable way the group escapes the island, Gabato's fortune is made and he expands his tour business. And the grandfather? He's ready to set off on another adventure.

"We appreciate being asked to be a part of *Journey 2: The Mysterious Island*," Conklin told the ARRL. "It is always thrilling to see Amateur Radio in popular culture, and hopefully young people will feel the excitement and want to explore the magic of radio."

RAC to Split Ontario into Four Sections

On February 6, Radio Amateurs of Canada (**RAC**) issued a **statement on their website** that the Ontario Section would be split into four new RAC Administrative Sections, effective September 1, 2012. The reason given for the restructure was "...to create a management model that better communicates with, and represents the interests of, the overall Ontario Amateur population." The Ontario Section will be dissolved and be replaced with four new RAC Sections: Ontario North, Ontario South, Ontario East and the Greater Toronto Area. The new section abbreviations will be announced when final.

This new change will affect ARRL contests and Field Day in the following ways:

- For ARRL contests that use ARRL/RAC sections as multipliers -- the **ARRL November Sweepstakes** and the **ARRL 160 Meter Contest** -- there will be an overall increase of three available multipliers.
- ARRL contests that use US states and Canadian provinces as multipliers -- the **ARRL RTTY Roundup**, the **ARRL International DX Contest** and the **ARRL 10 Meter Contest** -- are unaffected by this change. ARRL VHF+ contests and the IARU HF Championships are also unaffected by this change.
- The first contest to be affected by the RAC administrative change will be the 2012 ARRL November Sweepstakes, which will now require 83 multipliers to achieve a Clean Sweep.
- **ARRL Field Day** does not use multipliers, but Ontario stations will send new Section abbreviations as part of their exchanges.
- _____

World Record Balloon Attempt

A group of Amateur Radio operators hopes to establish a world distance record for an unmanned, helium-filled balloon. The BLT-28 balloon will launch from Katy, Texas, on a journey that will take it across the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and then on to Nanjing, China. The South Texas Balloon Launch Team plans to release the balloon at 3 PM CST (2100 UTC) Saturday, February 11.

During the trans-Atlantic crossing, when out of range of shore based stations, the balloon's **APRS** beacon will operate on the International Space Station (ISS) packet digipeater frequency of 145.825 MHz.

The balloon payload package weighs only about 5 ounces and contains a high altitude GPS tracking system and a 144 MHz FM APRS Amateur Radio transmitter. To conserve

battery life, no camera equipment will be on board. The maximum altitude is expected to be above 19 miles, with horizontal speeds between 100 and 150 miles per hour.

You can track the progress of the flight **online** by entering the payload call sign KT5TK-11. Those in the southern and southeastern United States have a good chance of copying the APRS beacons directly as the balloon passes nearby.

The APRS telemetry transmitter is frequency agile to cope with different APRS standards across the globe. The frequencies used will be:

USA: 144.390 MHz
mid-Atlantic: 145.825 MHz (International Space Station packet digipeater frequency)
Europe and beyond: 144.800 MHz

--Trevor Hawkins, M5AKA, AMSAT-UK

February Meeting Minutes

No minutes were recorded at the February meeting. The club secretary was absent, none of the membership volunteered to take notes.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely — Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00 _____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00 _____
Student ---------- $ 5.00 _____
Repeater/Autopatch donation --- _____
Call/Name badge -------- $11.00 _____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues ---------- $37.00 _____

Total ---------- _____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
DATE:_____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143